

that the necessity for proof is increased. I should rather suggest that the variation in the plumage and number of tail-feathers in the genus, which Captain Beebe shows to exist, are analogous to the variation of colour in *Stercorarius crepidatus*, and in the male of *Machetes pugnax*; and until some proof is given that the species of this genus do meet and interbreed, I agree with Mr. Stuart Baker (*cf.* Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. xxiv. 1916, p. 633). No doubt we shall have, when Captain Beebe comes to deal with the various races of the genus *Phasianus*, some case which will throw light on this difficult question; but except in the solitary case of the Chumba variety of the Impeyan Pheasant, which was described and accepted by such good naturalists as Marshall, Oates, and Sharpe as a distinct species, but which is now relegated to its proper place by ornithologists generally, I can think of no similar instance amongst the Phasianidæ.

Knowing as I do the great difficulties, both climatic and geographical, which are met with in observing the habits of the forest-haunting Pheasants in the dense rocky and inaccessible thickets which they love, I especially admire the skill and patience which Captain Beebe shows as a field-naturalist and observer; and the care which he has taken to select and quote from the existing accounts of the habits and life-history of the Pheasants makes his book an almost unique model for future monographers. His numerous photographs of their native haunts show great skill as a bird-watcher and add immensely to the interest and value of the work.

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V.—*On the Eclipse Plumage of Spermophila pileata.*

By F. E. BLAAUW, M.B.O.U.

I BOUGHT a living specimen of this rare little finch in a vegetable shop in Santos in Brazil in May 1911. It had no black cap and no rosy gloss on the lower back and sides, so that I thought that it was either a young bird or a female. I was assured that it was an adult male. I bought the bird,

and took it to the ship as I was going homeward. Not many days afterwards the little bird began to sing, and shortly after I arrived in Holland it began to moult and acquired the black cap and rosy tinge on the feathers of the lower back and sides, and also the whitish cheeks. The bill also changed from yellowish horn-colour into jet-black.

After having worn this dress a few months the bird moulted again, and I was surprised to find that it again acquired the sober, nearly uniformly buff dress that it had worn when I bought it in Santos. The bill also lost its black colour.

Since that time the little bird has moulted regularly from one dress into the other, generally twice a year, the black cap and bill and other ornamental colours forming the breeding-dress. The bird is in full song then. The song is very pleasant and has some remarkable notes.

Although such a small mite, it is very aggressive, and will not suffer other birds in its cage or even in a large aviary.

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VI.—*List of the Birds of the Canary Islands, with detailed reference to the Migratory Species and the Accidental Visitors.* Part I. CORVIDÆ—SYLVIIDÆ. By DAVID A. BANNERMAN, M.B.E., B.A., M.B.O.U., F.R.G.S.

#### INTRODUCTION.

FOR several years before the war I was engaged upon a work embodying all that is known of the Birds of the Canary Islands. For this purpose I have had translated almost every foreign work bearing on the subject, in addition to which I have consulted the many English papers written by British ornithologists who have visited the islands and studied the Ornis of the Group.

Every year from 1908 to 1913 I visited the Archipelago myself and made various expeditions, both privately and on behalf of the Natural History Museum, to gain a thorough